Personnel Newsletter

Calling Mentees and Mentors for ACES Class of '04-'05

This is the annual call for employees who are interested in participating as a mentee or mentor in the Center's formal mentoring program called ACES, which stands for Advancing Careers and Employee Success. The new group will begin with 2 days of training in October 2004 and end in November 2005 with an end-of-year formal recognition ceremony.

Now in its second year, the ACES program consists of formal training, facilitated matching of mentors and mentees, and a year-long series of workshops and tune-up sessions. With the assistance of a training consultant, mentees in the program will develop a mentoring action plan that includes developmental assignments and networking opportunities. They also sign a formal agreement with their mentor which serves as an official commitment of time and effort for the mentor, mentee, and mentee's supervisor;

The ACES Program provides an excellent opportunity for mentees to benefit from developing a mentoring relationship or adding structure to an existing one. It is not meant to replace Glenn's current culture of informal mentoring, which continues to be encouraged and supported by mentoring skills workshops and supplemented by video programs and e-learning courses available at our Learning Center.

Mentoring activities are personally rewarding, strongly encouraged by Center leaders, and specifically called for in NASA's Strategic Management of Human Capital Plan. The ACES Program was designed by a Center team specifically to help Glenn employees achieve their potential, to help the Center meet the challenges of our changing workforce, and to contribute to NASA's need for a strong learning organization.

To sign up, call Ms. Judith Budd, at extension 3-5580 no later than September 24, 2004.

For more information about ACES, please visit the Web site at:
http://www.grc.nasa.gov/WWW/ODT/Mentoring/.

IMPORTANT CHANGE

On Monday, August 30, 2004, a change to Employee Express (EEx) Sign on Access became effective.

EEx Users with less than an eight (8) digit EEx PINs must change their EEx PINS to a minimum of eight (8) digits.

This EEx change is mandatory in the effort to improve EEx security access.

Inside this Issue:

Engineering and Scientific Training Needs for FY05

The Engineering Training Committee (ETC) is seeking input for the engineering and scientific training needs assessment for FY05.

This initial process was started in February 1988. Every year the needs assessment has ensured high quality and more precise engineering and scientific training. The process was recognized by the NASA Engineering Training Steering Committee as one of the "Agency Best Practices."

For access to the FY04 Engineering and Scientific Training Plan and to see what classes were offered this year, visit our Web site at:

http://www.grc.nasa.gov/WWW/ODT/etc.htm.

Maintaining an up-to-date education is both an opportunity and a continuing responsibility of every NASA employee. With the rapid evolution of technology and tools, the knowledge obtained by a technical education quickly becomes out-of-date.

The discipline teams identify and prioritize training needs, which are reviewed by the ETC and Center management. Each team consists of a facilitator from the ETC and discipline experts from the relevant divisions across the lab. This approach enables areas of common interest to be identified and prioritized across organizational boundaries to come up with the most comprehensive and efficient training plan possible.

Engineers and scientists work with your contact person in your discipline area. Help identify the training you need to improve your skills or learn new skills in order to get your job accomplished. Teams composed of engineers and scientists from the following 12 disciplines identify the specific training needs, and who knows better then they? The FY04 discipline areas and teams are listed below:

Acoustics - Facilitator: Barbara Esker, Members: Joe Grady, Ed Envia, Bill Hughes, and Beth Cooper.

Aerospace Propulsion and Systems Analysis - Facilitator: Barbara Esker, Members: Joshua Freeh, Ken Fisher, Israel Greenfeld, Bruce Manners, and Melissa McGuire.

Bioengineering - Facilitator: Kathy Schubert, Members: Jeffrey D. Wilson, Marsha Nall, and Gail Perusek.

Chemical/Combustion - Facilitator: Sandra Foust, Members: Timothy D. Smith, Paul Penko, and Dave Urban.

Electrical/Controls/Health Management - Facilatator: Kathy Schubert, Members: Mary Zeller, Kevin Melcher, Robert Jones, Bruce Manners, Glenn Lindamood, Dennis Eichenberg, and Alan Hewston.

Engineering Mechanics/Manufacturing - Facilitator: John Taylor, Members: John Gyekenyesi, George Stefko, Jim Zakrajsek, Phil Abel, Roger Chamberlin, Casey Blaze, Mei Liao, and Dave Petratca.

Materials - Facilitator: Sandra Foust, Members: Brian Jackson, Bob Draper, Hugh Gray, and Rick Wiedenmannott.

Optics - Facilitator: John Taylor, Members: Robert Anderson, Felix Miranda, Devon Griffin, Michael Lewis, and Glenn Williams.

Pathfinder/Technology Transfer - Facilitator: John Taylor, Members: Dan Glover, Jeffrey Wilson, Isi Greenfeld, Felix Miranda, and Bill Saettel.

Software - Facilitator: Kathy Schubert, Members: Karl Vaden, Glenn Software Working Group, Cynthia Calhoun, contact.

Systems Engineering - Facilitator: Barbara Esker, Members: Vince Lalli, Jun Mao, Israel Greenfeld, Leon Collins, and Chris Beins.

Thermal/Fluids/Icing - Facilitator: Barbara Esker, Members: Brian Reed, Ken Suder, Jim Heidmann, Tom Bond, Dave Arend, Nicholas Georgiadis, John McQuillen, and Derrick Cheston.

The ETC was formed in February 1998 to develop a Center-wide, integrated training plan to meet the needs of approximately 1,000 engineers and scientists at GRC, and align them to the NASA Strategic Plan and Center Implementation Plan. The members have changed over the years; however, the members at the present time are John Taylor (Chair), Kathleen Schubert, Sandra Foust, Barbara Esker, and OD&TO members Nona Akos, Kathy Clark, and Cynthia Forman.

Thank you for your input and be sure to access our Website to see the entire plan and FY04 Engineering and Scientific Training.

http://www.grc.nasa.gov/WWW/ODT/etc.htm

Competency Management System (CMS)

What is the Competency Management System (CMS)?

- Collects current competency inventory in a common language across the Agency
- Identifies future competency needs tied to organizational strategies and POP cycle guidance
- Assists in gap analysis and workforce planning
- Provides search capabilities to find employees, positions, or projects that use competencies

Why Was CMS Created?

- In response to the President's Management Agenda & NASA Strategic Human Capital Plan

    Strategic management of human capital is critical for strengthening the Agency. The workforce is an asset just like infrastructure or financial capital

- In the spirit of "One NASA"

    An Agencywide system, shared by all Centers, was required for measuring and communicating workforce capability

- To assess alignment with work of Agency

    A methodology was needed for measuring imbalances in current or future workforce compared to NASA strategies and Program and Project requirements

- To support effective delivery of Human Capital Programs

    A process was required to support decisions about how to invest wisely in areas such as training and development, recruiting, career planning

What is a "competency?"

A base level of knowledge that is relevant to the Agency's mission. The knowledge can be applied across position and organizational boundaries. It is NOT roles or functions.

Why is this information being provided?

In the near future, employees will be asked to build and update their competency portfolios. More information will be provided prior to this initiative.

Important Open Season Dates

Federal Employees Group Life Insurance (FEGLI): OPM will be holding an Open Season from September 1- 30, 2004, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the FEGLI Program. Open Season elections will become effective on the first day of the first pay period that, begins **on or after September 1, 2005**, and follows a pay period during which the employee has been in a pay and duty status. For most employees on a biweekly pay period, this will be September 4, 2005.

Thrift Savings Plan (TSP): October 15 through December 31, 2004. Election changes made prior to December 11, 2004, will become effective December 12, 2004. Changes made December 12 through 31, 2004, will become effective the beginning of the pay period after the election change is made. All election changes must be made through Employee Express at www.employeeexpress.gov. Information about the Thrift Savings Program is available at www.tsp.gov.

Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB): November 8 through December 13, 2004. Elections changes will become effective January 9, 2005. Enrollment changes must be made through Employee Express at www.employeeexpress.gov. Information about the various health plans will be available at http://www.opm.gov/insure/health/index.asp.

Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA): November 8 through December 13, 2004. Information and enrollment changes must be made through the https://www.fsafeds.com/fsafeds/index.asp Web site.

ANNUAL LEAVE "USE OR LOSE"

The time of the year has arrived when employees should review their annual leave balances, keeping in mind the 30-day (240 hours) carryover limitation. Annual leave in excess of the carryover limitation is considered "use or lose" annual leave and must be used before the end of the leave year to avoid forfeiture.

If it appears that you will have an excess of annual leave, the following information should be considered:

EMPLOYEES:

1. Plan your leave for the balance of the leave year, which ends January 8, 2005. Special attention should be given to schedule leave to avoid forfeiture of "use or lose" annual leave.

2. Submit a request to your supervisor, requesting "use or lose" leave before the start of the third biweekly pay period prior to the end of the leave year (November 27, 2004). You may use WebTADS to submit the request.

3. If your annual leave request is denied or approved leave is canceled, an alternative period of time should be scheduled using WebTADS or e-mail.

4. Maintain copies of the WebTADS or e-mail approvals that document your request to use your "use or lose" annual leave. These documents will be needed if you have to request restoration of forfeited leave.

SUPERVISORS:

1. Assist your employees in planning and scheduling the use of annual leave on a year-round basis to provide for reasonable vacation periods and to ensure the use of leave that employees might otherwise forfeit.

2. Take prompt action on leave requests.

3. Ask an employee to resubmit a written request in WebTADS or e-mail for another period if you have had to deny a request for "use or lose" leave. E-mails approving "use or lose" leave must be dated no later than November 27, 2004. Requested leave and approvals may be accomplished using WebTADS.

4. Request an exigency of public business be approved if you see no alternative to cancellation of employee's leave, which could result in a loss of leave. An exigency of public business must be approved by the Human Resources Officer before you cancel "use or lose" leave that cannot be rescheduled before the end of the leave year.

CARRYOVER OF EXCESS ANNUAL LEAVE

Unused earned annual leave may be carried over from one leave year to the next. The carryover amount, however, is limited by Federal law to 30 days (240 hours) for non-SES employees. Annual leave that was forfeited because it was in excess of the maximum leave ceiling, may be restored if lost due to administrative error, exigency of public business when the leave was scheduled in advance, or sickness of the employee when the leave was scheduled in advance.

In order to be eligible for excess leave carryover, the following requirements must be met:

1. The leave must have been scheduled, in advance, prior to the start of the third pay period before the end of the leave year (by November 27, 2004). To be considered scheduled in advance, the leave must have been requested and approved prior to the cut-off date. E-mails requesting and approving the use of leave or documentation from WebTADS must be available to document that the leave was scheduled in accordance with this requirement.

2. If applicable, an exigency of public business must be approved by the Human Resources Officer prior to canceling any scheduled "use or lose" leave. In such cases, the immediate supervisor must prepare a memorandum addressed to the Human Resources Officer, requesting an exigency of public business determination. The request should identify:

   – the proposed exigency;

   – the beginning and ending dates of the proposed exigency;

   – an indication that no other employee can carry out the work to be accomplished;

   – a description of the effects of a postponement of the work; and

   – the number of hours of annual leave involved if an exigency is approved.

The written request should be concurred on by the Director Of or Staff Office Chief and be routed through the Office of Human Resources and Workforce Planning, Program and Policy Office. Documentation of the request and approval of the leave should be attached to the memorandum.

 After the beginning of the leave year, an employee may request restoration of leave lost due to an approved exigency, an injury or illness prevented him/her from taking scheduled annual leave, or an administrative error. The official authorized to approve excess leave carryover is the Human Resources Officer. Requests to the Human Resources Officer for excess leave carryover due to exigency or illness/injury must include copies of the e-mail requesting and approving the use of the annual leave lost, or documentation from WebTADS, as applicable.

The Office of Human Resources and Workforce Planning will post information with detailed instructions on the specific procedures to be followed on Today@Glenn.